STENOGRAPHIC RECORD

PROTOCOL

Government Session No. 10/Tevet 5724

8 Tevet 5724 – November 24, 1963

Ministers Present:

L. Eshkol (Chairman), A. Eben, Y. Allon, Y. Almogi, Z. Aran, Y. Bar-Yehuda, M. Dayan, Z. Varhafte, D. Yosef, P. Sapir, B.S. Shitrit, H.M. Shapira, A. Sasson

Ministers Absent:

Y. Bourg (abroad), G. Meir (abroad)

Y. Uzai – Secretary of the Government

Agenda:

105. Death of the President of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy

106. Travel of the President of the State to the United States

107. Death of Member of Knesset Meir Argov, may he rest in peace

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Item 105: Mourning for the Death of the President of the United States

Item 106: Travel of the President of the State to the United States

Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, L. Eshkol:

All of us understand that this session is in essence a session of mourning. It seems we have a double mourning.

We have all been struck by the wicked and senseless assassination of the President of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy. The entire world is in shock, and we are with it.

The late Kennedy was a radiant and overflowing personality, overflowing with zeal and diligence and a will to guide the world toward peace and away from war. He made an impression as an enlightened president seeking new paths for world peace and peace in his nation. He fought in his country for equality without discrimination; he fought in the world for peace between peoples. He sought ways to reduce armaments and maintain balance in armaments, according to his assessment.

He was a man at the beginning of his path and work and emerged as a rising force. The world was permitted to believe, and we believed, that within him lay much more than he managed to reveal in the course of two to three years of his presidency; he was destined to rise higher still.

All of this adds to the sense of the magnitude of the loss. Deep is the sorrow and mourning for the loss of an eminent and energetic leader for the great American people, a people in whose hands are concentrated

tremendous material and spiritual power in our times. Lovers of peace and freedom hoped that he would extract the world from its labyrinth and dangers.

He was a friend to Israel and to our state. On various occasions he made this friendship known and did not hide it.

Upon receiving the news, the President sent a message of condolences in the name of the people. I also sent a message to the new President and expressed our grief and shock in the name of the government and conveyed condolences to his family, friends, and the American people.

We honor his memory now and join in the mourning of the American people and the world. I propose to declare three days of mourning in the country.

The President is flying today at midday to the United States to attend the funeral. The government must decide on this. We will accompany the President at Lod as he departs.

And this is the formal decision: The Government declares three days of mourning for the death of the President of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, beginning on Sunday morning until Wednesday at midnight.

On these days, the flags of the nation will be flown at half-mast on all public buildings.

All official state events will be canceled.

On Monday at 5 p.m., a special prayer service will be held in memory of the late President of the United States at the Shuron Synagogue in Jerusalem, attended by the Acting President of the State, Prime Minister and his colleagues, rabbis, members of the Knesset, and public figures.

On Monday at 4 p.m., a mourning session of the Knesset will be held.

Decisions:

To declare three days of mourning for the death of the President of the United States, beginning on Sunday, 8 Tevet 5724, in the morning, until Wednesday, 10 Tevet, at midnight.

On these days, the flags of the nation will be flown on all public buildings at half-mast, and all official state events will be canceled.

Item 107: Death of Member of Knesset Meir Argov, may he rest in peace

Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, L. Eshkol:

I said earlier that there is another word of Job—surely you already know that last night our comrade Meir Argov passed away suddenly, a death of a kiss—a man of goodhearted devotion and loyalty, a pioneer in every fiber of his soul. He was a faithful representative of Israeli labor and of the working people.

From his earliest days, from the days of the movement at Nes-Tziona, he worked in Petah Tikva. He was secretary of the workers of Petah Tikva. From then until now, through the Brigade, he was filled with ability

—a man of volunteering for every matter, for every thing.

I have said already: he was goodhearted. He was no gossip. He was devoted to every post he held with all his heart. He burned for years in the fire of his excitement and enthusiasm, and last night, at dawn, he gave up his soul.

We are immersed in mourning for his death, and we send condolences to his family, to his friends and companions, who are many and numerous among the workers of the land of Israel.

Also as a member of the Knesset, as chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs and Defense—and those who knew him trusted him as a man who spoke truth, said what his heart desired, and fought for his truth—may his memory be blessed.

(The members of the government heard all the words of the Prime Minister standing.)

The session ended at 10:28.